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The Montana
TOURIST SURVEY

1954

Advertising Office

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STATE OF MONTANA
HIGHWAY COMMISSION
HELENA

December 28, 1954

State of Montana
Highway Commission
Helena, Montana

Gentlemen:

Once again it is a pleasure to submit the annual Montana Tourist Survey which gives an insight into the state's third largest industry.

This study is more inclusive than before inasmuch as Canadian traffic figures are included for the first time. Data on the number of Canadian cars and passengers entering Montana during the summer months was provided by U. S. Customs. Heretofore, not very many Canadian cars were included in our traffic counts (only those checked at the Highway port of entry stations, of which none are located on the Canadian border), and therefore spending by Canadian visitors was not included to any great extent in previous tourist studies.

With the inclusion of this Canadian business, we find that Montana's 1954 tourist take nearly reached $87,000,000.

Practically all of Montana's developed tourist attractions are accessible by highway. These attractions do not depreciate . . . year after year they bring millions of motorists to drive over Montana highways. Montana is such a vast vacationland that its network of roads can easily handle many additional visitors each year.

If we continue to invite tourists to our state and to stimulate travel through every possible means, there is no reason why Montana's tourist business will not soon reach $100,000,000.

Respectfully yours,

Albert Erickson

Albert Erickson
Advertising Director

OCLC 25745137

1954 Tourist Season Had Its Ups and Downs

If there is one word which might describe the 1954 season, it is "spotty." Tourist suppliers reported generally that the season started slowly and by August was at a high peak. It held up well through Labor Day.

Port of entry counts of tourist cars showed traffic behind a year ago during June and the first half of July. From there every week was above 1953 so that the port of entry counts totaled a 3.4% increase over 1953.

Both Glacier and Yellowstone National parks are now on a calendar basis, and total attendance at these two national playgrounds are not yet available. By the end of September, Yellowstone reported an attendance of 1,294,976, or a 3% rise from the previous year. Glacier park was about even with 1953, but with a nice fall, it is anticipated Glacier may have its biggest year.

Canadian Spending Pushes Tourist Total to New High

In the travel summary for 1954, which follows, the total expenditure of tourists in Montana is listed at $86,980,230. This is $5,500,000 more than tourist spending in 1953 which was set at $81,282,398.

By way of explanation: Heretofore, in the annual tourist surveys, the only Canadian business included was that of the Canadian cars counted at the Montana Highway Commission port of entry stations. Since no Montana port of entry stations are located on the Canadian border, it was known that many Canadian tourists were coming into the state and not being counted. Through cooperation of U. S. Customs, car and passenger figures of all Canadians coming into Montana during the last half of June and the months of July and August were included in the 1954 survey for the first time.

In order not to duplicate any Canadian car counts, questionnaire cards of Canadians distributed through our ports of entry were checked and it was found that 40% of the Canadian cars entering via U. S. Customs stations go through Montana port of entry stations and are counted there also. It is the weighted U. S. Customs figure, plus the actual Canadian counts made at our stations, which are used as a basis for this additional Canadian business.

The average daily expenditure of tourists to Montana in 1954 is set at $6.66. This figure is regarded as low for the Canadians, because many of them spend hundreds of dollars for American products while in the state.

Record Number of Inquiries for Montana Literature Received

Montana in 1954 launched a national advertising campaign which was carried in 12 national magazines and 30 metropolitan dailies. During the course of the year, this campaign produced a record total of inquiries for Montana vacation literature numbering 68,691.

To service these inquiries, nearly a million pieces of material about Montana including folders about our scenic attractions, dude ranches, campgrounds, state parks and roadside attractions, were distributed by the State Advertising Office.

1954 MONTANA TRAVEL SUMMARY

The National Association of Travel Organizations has advocated for years a standard method of compiling tourist statistics, but as yet, each state conducts its own survey in its own way. Some employ interview teams, others use sales tax, gasoline tax and liquor tax increases or decreases as the yardstick of their state's tourist business. Many use the Montana method of handing out questionnaire cards.

Montana is one of the few states with port of entry greeter stations, and it is possible to make actual counts of tourist cars and passengers during the summer months. For this reason, the Montana travel statistics are regarded as authentic and reliable. 15,000 questionnaire cards were handed out at the port of entry stations to provide information for this study.

Tourist Automobile Traffic

Number of tourist cars counted at ports of entry during summer months	273,051	
Canadian cars entering Montana during summer months at U. S. Customs	65,657	338,708
Number of tourist cars entering Montana during remainder of the year*		470,193
TOTAL NUMBER OF OUT-OF-STATE CARS		808,901

Visitors Arriving by Auto

Number of visitors arriving by car during the summer at port of entry and Custom stations	1,083,865
Number of visitors arriving by car during the remainder of the year*	1,498,511

*Computed from Planning Survey findings

Visitors Arriving by Train, Plane, Bus

Number of visitors arriving by conveyance other than auto (Based on American Automobile Assn.'S report that 85% of American tourists use automobiles, and the other 15% travel by other means)	455,704
TOTAL NUMBER OF OUT-OF-STATE VISITORS	3,038,080
Average number of passengers per car	3.23
Average length of stay	4.3 days
Average expenditure per person per day	$6.66
Average expenditure per person per stay	$28.63
Average expenditure per car per stay	$92.48
TOTAL 1954 TOURIST EXPENDITURE IN MONTANA	$86,980,230

A Returned Questionnaire Card

PLEASE FILL OUT AND DROP IN ANY MAIL BOX

HOME STATE: Minn

NO. IN PARTY: 2

MAIN DESTINATION: Canadian Rockies & Home

HOW MANY DAYS DID YOU SPEND IN MONTANA? 7

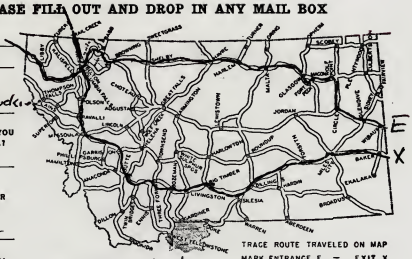
HOW MUCH DID YOUR PARTY SPEND IN MONTANA? 150.00

HOUSING IN MONTANA (CHECK LODGING USED)

HOTEL ___ MOTEL V

FRIENDS ___ CAMPING ___

TRAILER ___ NONE ___



REMARKS: Should have Wayside picnic areas

Averages	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954
Number in party	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.23
Number of Days spent in state	5.4	5.5	5.2	4.2	4.2	4.3
Amount spent per person per day	$5.70	$5.38	$5.70	$6.52	$6.75	$6.66
Amount spent per person per stay	$30.77	$30.91	$30.20	$27.38	$28.35	$28.63
Amount spent per party per stay	$95.39	$98.92	$96.64	$89.78	$93.57	$92.48

Sources of Montana Tourists

For a number of years, about a third of visitors coming to Montana hail from the Pacific Coast states. Here are the top ten for 1954:

1. Washington
2. California
3. Minnesota
4. Idaho
5. Oregon
6. Illinois
7. Michigan
8. North Dakota
9. Wisconsin
10. Utah

TOURISTS PAY TAXES TOO!

Take gasoline taxes for example: Questionnaire cards showed that in 1954 tourists drove an average of 577 miles while in the Treasure State.

At the rate of 15 miles to the gallon each tourist bought on the average 38.5 gallons of gasoline, paying the 6¢ per gallon state tax.

6¢ x 38.5 - $2.31 which each tourist party, on the average, paid in Montana gas taxes.

808,901 Tourist Cars in 1954
$2.31 Av. Gas Tax
$1,868,561 Montana gasoline taxes
_____ paid by Tourist Motorists

Do You Know--

$1,868,561 when matched with Federal Highway Aid on a 57% Federal and 43% state basis makes possible $4,345,600 in Highway Construction.

All municipal, county and state governments participate in taxes paid by tourists whether it is by way of property taxes on tourist suppliers, state income taxes of these same suppliers, or state beer and liquor taxes.

MONTANA YEARLY COLLECTIONS AND REFUNDS OF MOTOR FUEL TAXES

Year	Gross	Refunds	Net
1945	$ 6,278,017	$1,792,244	$ 4,485,773
1946	8,185,528	2,027,228	6,158,300
1947	9,221,998	2,359,162	6,862,836
1948	10,084,529	2,655,762	7,428,767
1949	11,574,569	2,755,365	8,819,204
1950	13,575,654	3,178,866	10,396,788
1951	14,178,792	2,480,559	11,698,233
1952	15,263,154	3,346,212	11,916,941
1953	15,960,355	2,282,003#	13,678,353
1954	15,375,695*	3,052,224*	12,323,471*

*1954 is reported through November only

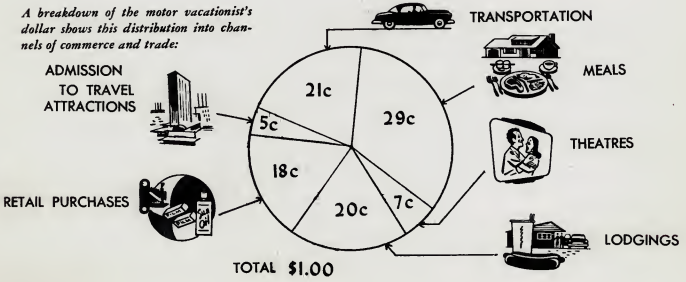
#Refund total low because a number of '53 refund claims were not paid until 1954

How the Tourist Dollar is Spent

Below is a pie chart, prepared by the American Automobile Association, which shows how the average tourist dollar is spent. On this basis, here is how the various trade channels of Montana benefited from the $86,980,230 left by visitors to the state:

How Much	How Spent
29c spent for Meals amounted to $25,224,266	At restaurants and drive-ins, which in turn bought Montana beef, chickens, milk, bread and other products.
21c spent for Transportation amounted to $18,265,848	For gasoline (including a 6c state tax) oil, lubrication, trains, planes, busses.
20c spent for Lodgings amounted to $17,396,046	At motels, hotels, resorts and dude ranches.
18c spent for Retail Purchases amounted to $15,656,441	For clothing, sporting goods, cameras, film, drugs, candy, soft drinks, liquor, etc.
7c spent for Theaters and other Amusement $6,088,616	For movies, entertainment
5c spent for Admission to Travel Attractions $4,349,011	At National parks, caverns, zoos, museums, cruises, etc.

Many, many services benefit from the tourist business. Agriculture has a particularly big stake in tourism as can be seen from the $25,000,000 which was spent for food. Employment is increased in the summer time because of job opportunities created by the millions of visitors who come to the Land of Shining Mountains annually.



Types of Accommodations
Used While in Montana

No great change in the type of accommodations used by visitors to Montana was noted in 1954. There was a slight swing upward in the use of motels and in camping out. Types of lodging used were as follows:

Motels - 59.2%
Friends and Relatives - 13.2%
Camping - 11.8%
Hotels-10.9%
No accommodations - 1.7%
Others - 0.2%

Those reporting no use of Montana accommodations, either slept in their cars, or cut across a corner of the state, not staying overnight.

Likes and Dislikes of
The Visitors

In a random sampling of the returned questionnaires, these subjects were touched upon most often.

Good Roads--500
Poor Roads--25
Fair Roads--29
Too much construction--10

Port of Entry service helpful--105
Port of Entry criticism--2

Campgrounds good--19
Need more campground and
picnic areas--90

Scenery--marvelous, beautiful--300
People--hospitable, friendly--251

Accommodations good--50
Good motels--48
Bad motels--5
Motels too expensive--5
Not enough good motels--6

Enjoyed Virginia City--20

Too many narrow bridges--8

Keep livestock off the
highways--3

Food good--40
Food too high--7

Good fishing--7
Poor fishing--4

Gas too high--17

People wanting to come back--62

Not enough markings on high-
ways--29

Good Speed laws--10

Enjoyed Glacier Park--45

Keep cars off the streets
in Virginia City--4

Enjoyed Lewis and Clark
Caverns--13

Enjoyed Historical markers--40

Enjoyed Custer Battlefield
and Cemetery--5

Montana needs more publicity--6

Principal Points of Interest:

As usual Glacier Park proved to be the strongest tourist magnet, followed by Yellowstone Park with other attractions in lesser degrees.

Bouquets and Brickbats

Bouquets:

SCENERY--"After leaving Yellowstone Park we had intended going directly home through your state, but found so many things to see and such beautiful country we remained five days"--Michigan motorist.

"If the rest of your state is as interesting as what we saw, we would enjoy seeing the whole state"--Iowa.

"Your Fort Peck dam is remarkable"--Saskatchewan.

"Enjoyed every minute of it. Far better than advertised. Get your chamber of commerce on the ball"--California

"The country is beautiful. Good fishing and courteous people. The only complaint is I couldn't stay long enough, but will be back next year"--Nebraska.

ROADS--"Good roads and had a very nice trip"--Washington.

"The roads were very good. The food was fine. The motels were the best on our trip--also not expensive"--Minnesota.

"It was a pleasure driving on your roads the first time we were ever in your state. They were so wonderful we only wish we could drive on them all the way back to Chicago"--Illinois.

"Yellowstone road to Red Lodge is the most magnificent mountain road in the country"--Colorado.

"You have very good roads and the best speed laws in any state. By all means do not ever install radar. I love Montana and so does my wife"--California.

PORTS OF ENTRY--"The gracious young man who greeted us should be in diplomatic service. His warmth and courtesy was most appreciated"--Indiana.

"We enjoyed getting the maps and tourist information at the border. Otherwise would have missed Virginia City which we considered one of the most interesting places on our trip"--Minnesota.

HOSPITALITY--"Very pleased with Montana hospitality, prices and roads. Montana appears to be the nicest state through the mountain region"--Minnesota.

"We enjoyed your state very much. Your hospitality is something to be proud of. You should advertise your state as having everything but the ocean. Thank you"--Manitoba, Canada.

"We have found Montana the only state in 27 that welcome tourists. We will be back to see the rest of the state"--Nebraska.

SPEED LAWS & POLICE--"Montana's speed law is a blessing. 60 is about my limit but it's a relief not to worry when I do happen to climb to 65"--Washington.

"An expression of thanks to Police Officer McKenzie of Miles City in going out of his way to locate a place for car maintenance"--New Jersey.

ACCIDENTS--"We were exceptionally taken with the idea and the value of the accident crosses. Accidents would be cut if every state adopted the idea"--Missouri.

HISTORY--"Montana is the best tourist state in west. Very pleased with courtesy and interesting historic places to see at no charge"--Washington.

"Montana roads, road signs and historical markers are fine. The new museum at Helena is beautiful"--New York.

LEWIS AND CLARK CAVERN--"Fascinated by Lewis and Clark Cavern. Wish you could improve facilities at campgrounds"--Minnesota.

HIGHWAY SIGNS--"We especially liked the highway signs telling distance every 5 and 10 miles. We think more towns should make efforts to keep tourists over such as Helena has done this year"--Washington.

GLACIER PARK--"Glacier National Park was one of outstanding scenic beauty, also Hungry Horse Dam. Wheat fields in Judith Basin supreme. Keep improving your highways"--Kansas.

"Prettiest state and best roads in the Northwest. Thanks"--Texas.

Brickbats:

ROADS--"I wish the roads would have been wider"--Iowa.

"Roads were poor, especially U. S. 2. Lack of roadside tables was noticeable. At least towns could provide roadside or tourist parks. Otherwise most enjoyable. Historical markers enjoyed"--Washington, D.C.

"We hate your one lane bridges"--Utah.

"We traveled a total of 7,015 miles and Montana had the worst roads. Let's fix the roads and get a few more good restaurants along them"--Ohio.

PRICES--"Prices seem to be high compared with those in other places that we have been"--Maryland.

"I don't see why steak should be so high priced with all the nice beef they raise in Montana"--Washington.

CAMPGROUNDS AND PICNIC TABLES--"Roadside table facilities are most miserable. Otherwise Montana is fine"--Florida.

"Missoula wayside camp is a menace to health"--North Dakota.

"Trailer parking facilities in state much below standards. Modern, clean trailer lodges should attract greater tourist travel"--California.

"Incomplete facilities at Lewis and Clark Cavern state park--campground and rest rooms. Also, too many cows"--Virginia.

INSUFFICIENT TURNOUTS--"No place to turn off road. Not enough road markers"--Nebraska.

"Montana drivers are careless. Should be more turnouts on highway"--Washington.

SILVER DOLLARS--"Silver dollars for change are a nuisance to tourists because of their weight and size"--New Jersey.

LIQUID REFRESHMENTS--"Too many liquor stores and bars"--Kansas.

General:

"I loved your state. Wish I could live in it"--New York.

"As seasoned travelers we found the Beartooth Mts. the most scenic and the roads are a spectacular work of engineering. We'll recommend this highway to our friends"--Missouri.

"This is our fifth time through your state, and the folks are friendlier and we like it more every time"--North Carolina.

"We like the marking of points of interest along highways. Excellent roads and beautiful scenery. Many thanks"--Iowa.

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IT'S BIG BUSINESS

Is MONTANA'S Tourist Business